IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification as follows.

[0005] Disclosed is a system, method, and computer program product for filtering electronic mail. According to one embodiment, unwanted email is blocked at the server by employing automated methods to verify that the email is from either a known sender or an actual human user. Various embodiments include receiving, in a data processing system, an electronic mail message. These embodiments also include determining if the electronic mail message includes an intro-word. These embodiments also include delivering the electronic mail message if the electronic mail message includes the intro-word. These embodiments also include storing the electronic mail message if the electronic mail message does not include the intro-word.

[0016] Those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the hardware depicted in Figure 1 may vary for particular implementations. For example, other peripheral devices, such as an optical disk drive and the like, also may be used in addition or in place of the hardware depicted. The depicted example is provided for the purpose of explanation only and is not meant to imply architectural limitations with respect to the present invention.

[0024] If the subject line includes that receiver's intro-word (step 210), then the sender's email address is added to the "white list" (step 250), which is a list of all valid senders, that message is accepted into the recipient's inbox (step 255), and any messages currently stored in the unconfirmed mailbox from that sender are delivered to the recipient's inbox (step 260). If the subject line does not include that receiver's intro-word (at step 210), then step 215 is performed.

[0025] If the message comes from anyone listed on the whitelist as an authorized sender (step 215), then that message is accepted into the recipient's inbox (step 255). If the message does not come from anyone listed on the whitelist as an authorized sender (at step 215), then step 220 is performed.

[0026] If that message comes from an authorized domain (e.g., any address at example.com) (step 220), then the message is accepted into the inbox (step 255). If the message does not comes from an authorized domain (at step 220), then step 225 is performed.

[0032] Preferably, the word or code transmitted to the user is in a non-computer harvestable form. This can be accomplished as in the exemplary note above, where the word is simply chosen from others on the screen, and the text of the message instructs the sender on how to locate the word. Alternately, the word can be transmitted and displayed as an image that has been manipulated to discourage optical character recognition, referred to herein as an "obscured" image. Figure 3 shows an exemplary word manipulated in such a fashion; while it is easy for a person to read, it is not in a form that a computer system can readily decipher.

[0034] If none of the above conditions have been met, including if the correct word was not received (in steps 235 or 240), the email is presumed to be spam and is left in the unconfirmed mailbox for a predefined period of time (step 265), then is typically deleted (step 270).

[0041] It is important to note that while the present invention has been described in the context of a fully functional system, those skilled in the art will appreciate that at least portions of the mechanism of the present invention are capable of being distributed in the form of instructions contained within a machine usable medium in any of a variety of forms, and that the present invention applies equally regardless of the particular type of instruction or signal bearing medium utilized to actually carry out the distribution. Examples of machine usable mediums include: nonvolatile, hard-coded type mediums such as read only memories (ROMs) or erasable, electrically programmable read only memories (EEPROMs), and user-recordable type mediums such as floppy disks, hard disk drives and compact disk read only memories (CD-ROMs) or digital versatile disks (DVDs), and transmission type mediums such as digital and analog communication links.